

Sidewalk Advisory Committee Minutes  
5/12/2014

In attendance:

Lori Conlan, Allison Pearce, John Mulligan, Dick Pratt, Dave Almy  
Ex Officio: Gene Swearingen

Observers: Charlie Snyder, Barbara Jackson, Tara Flynn, Alberto Martinez

Meeting called to order at 7:35PM

April 2014 minutes were approved with edits as motioned by DP, JM and AP.

GS filled us in on the submission of the RFP to the State Highway Administration (SHA). Jessica Silwick (the SHA manager), Century Engineering (design firm--a different firm will be used for construction), and the town (GS and Peter Benjamin) met in April. GS and the Mayor came away convinced that Century has a large portfolio and likely has the ability to tackle this project and understand our needs. DP asked if this firm has traffic engineering capabilities and GS responded that they are a full-service firm with capabilities to design streets, sidewalks, storm drains, etc. They also have an arborist on staff (but the committee noted that Phil Normandy should still be consulted). Century walked the town, and is now in the process of assembling a design bid proposal. At the same time SHA is developing their own estimate of requirements as a basis for ensuring the proposal. GS has the impression that this may take some time. We do not have an understanding of the current timeline for when to expect the next step.

Committee question how the town and the committee will be involved going forward. GS has asked to walk the route with Century. Our committee would also like to do a walk with the design firm. We all agreed that aside from Century's general qualifications, much will depend upon the experience of the particular staff assigned to the project. We should seek that information as soon as possible and be sure that undesirable staff switches do not happen. We discussed that given that the Town Council will review the project again at the 30% Design Phase, we should seek to meet with Century at least twice before that. Once as they are commencing work and once about halfway to the 30% mark.

AP asked about the right-of-way determinations. GS is under the impression that the SHA think they can do this with maps from the county and current plats. GS has the impression that SHA will take on these costs. AP asked if Century had experience with tree root bridging and GS responded that they did.

DP mentioned precedence with the Strathmore-Knowles state highway improvement project. The citizens advisory ad hoc committee for that multifaceted project was involved in the design, and ensured proper project completion (when they could). This SRTS committee should decide early how long, and how we will participate in the discussion (ie will we continue to the construction phase or disband after the design phase). While we can't be sure there will be a construction phase, we should think

through ahead of time how the committee can assist the Town during all possible design and construction phases. This conversation will be tabled until we are a bit further along.

The committee would like to develop a letter to the town that will be copied to the SHA (GS gave the impression that this letter would be fine for the town but may do more harm than good towards the SHA). It will discuss:

1. references and past projects of Century
2. timelines
3. meet with the Engineering firm once as they are commencing work, once at roughly the 20% design level (leading up to the 30% design review and decision point for the Town), and once at roughly the 95% design level.
4. definition of our charge and our need to participate in the process.

Observer comments:

CS again reiterated that the SHA and the historical trust will have to sign off on the process before construction. If the historical trust disagrees there could be a long battle. He recommended that this committee warn the town now about this possibility, and that we should discuss options. AP responded that CS's concerns would be appropriate to bring up to the Town Council, not the SRTS committee, since the Council as a legal body of government voted to move forward with a sidewalks project to the 30% design level. Any options would need to go to the town council.--Note we do need to have a better understand of when/how the SHA and the historic trust will be interacting on the design.

BJ cautioned that we do not have enough information to make any decisions to continue. She is worried that the project will be wasted town resources and money. She has put many questions to the SHA to gain answers, and is truly worried that the SHA is financing this and that the town will owe more than expected. She recommended that we stop the project now since we cannot possibly make informed decisions. TF said that is a town issue, that this committee cannot make that decision. BJ recommended that the town should seek clarification on whether SHA is contracting with Century independent of the Town, or whether the Town will be an official party to that contract.

Alberto asked how the process of a sidewalk decision came about. LC gave history. He expressed his dissatisfaction with a sidewalk project that will go in front of his house.

Action items: AP will connect with Rainscapes and will also draft our letter to the town.

Adjourned: 8:52 PM

Next Meeting TBA....June meeting will be for Rainscapes if AP can get an answer from them. As of now no June 2 meeting UNLESS more info comes from the SHA/Century negotiations.